

Message Text

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TAGS: AEMR, ET

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA AS OF 0600 HOURS (EST)
FEBRUARY 12, 1975 REPORT NO. 20

QUOTE:

A FEW AMERICAN AND BRITISH NEWSMEN HAVE REACHED ASMARA BY ROAD DESPITE ETHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT (EPMG) RESTRICTIONS. THE PRESS QUOTES SOURCES AS HAVING WITNESSED AN EXPLOSION OF A LARGE SECTION OF THE TOCOR RIVER BRIDGE, 10 MILES NORTH OF ASMARA ON THE ROAD TO KEREN. THE SOURCES BELIEVE THE DAMAGE MAY TAKE WEEKS TO REPAIR AND HAS EFFECTIVELY CUT OFF GOVERNMENT TROOPS FROM THE AREA NORTH OF THE BRIDGE. THE ONLY ROAD TO ASMARA WHICH REMAINS OPEN IS THE ONE TO ADDIS ABABA. IN A 2-1/2 HOUR MEETING WITH GENERAL TEFERI BENTI, CHAIRMAN OF THE EPMG, THE SUDANESE DELEGATION IN ADDIS ABABA DELIVERED A CEASE-FIRE APPEAL. THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE YET FROM THE EPMG, BUT THEY HAVE EMPHASIZED IN THE PAST THE INVIOABILITY OF ETHIOPIAN UNITY.

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THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS TO THE EMBASSY OF ARRESTS OF

ERITREANS IN ADDIS ABABA. MANY OF ASMARA'S RESIDENTS CONTINUE TO LEAVE THE CITY TO SEEK REFUGE AMONG RELATIVES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. EPMG SOLDIERS ARE NOT STOPPING THOSE WHO LEAVE THE CITY ON FOOT.

THE OAU COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IS TO MEET IN ADDIS ABABA FEBRUARY 13-21. SOME ERITREAN ACTIVITY IS EXPECTED IN ADDIS ABABA TO GAIN PUBLICITY AND TO DEMONSTRATE LACK OF EPMG SECURITY CONTROL IN ITS OWN CAPITAL. USUALLY RELIABLE ERITREAN SOURCES HAVE SAID THAT 200 ELF INSURGENTS HAVE ARRIVED IN ADDIS ABABA AND INTEND TO CAUSE DISTURBANCES DURING OAU CM MEETING.

THE TENTATIVE AND GRADUAL REDUCTION OF DOD AND CONTRACT PERSONNEL CONTINUES IN ASMARA. FIVE CONTRACTORS AND ONE DOD EMPLOYEE ARE TO LEAVE ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AIRCRAFT, REDUCING MANPOWER FROM 31 TO 25 (SIX DOD AND 19 CONTRACTORS). EVENTUALLY NSA WISHES TO REDUCE TO 16, THE MINIMUM NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN AND OPERATE THE COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.

UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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